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Great Britain. Parliament.
House of Commons.
Woodfall's report of the debate...on Sir William Pulteney's motion

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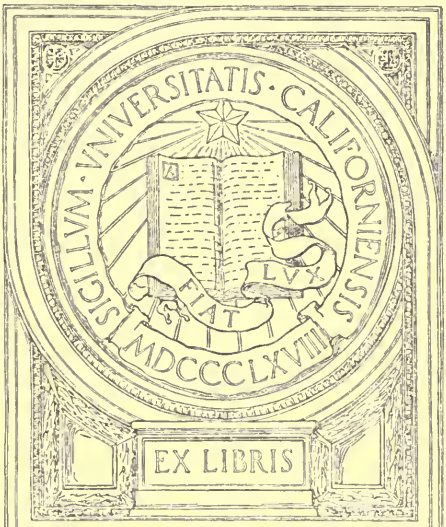

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WOODFALL's

REPORT OF THE DEBATE

IN THE

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HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON

Wednesday, Nov. 25, 1801,

ON

SIR WILLIAM PULTENEY's MOTION,

For a Committee to be appointed to take into Consideration the Papers laid upon the Table last Session of Parliament, relating to the Proceedings with Regard to the TRADE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND THE EAST INDIES, and to report their Opinion thereon to the House.

London:

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1802.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 25.

TRADE WITH INDIA.

SIR W. PULTENEY rose to make his promised motion on this important subject. He began by observing that he had the preceding day given notice of his intention to move that day for several additional papers. As he understood, however, that the Committee would have full power to call for persons, papers, and records, he should proceed at once to the subject to which he wished to draw the attention of the House. A great variety of documents had last session been laid upon the table with regard to the Trade between England and India, and his object was that these should now be fully considered. The grand question which arose out of them was, whether British Merchants were to receive such facilities as to enable them to enter into a competition with foreigners in a vast branch of Commerce? The question always appeared to him to be of the first magnitude, and it rose upon him in importance the

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more he considered it. Many objections had been made to the proposed regulations; these he had carefully weighed, and the effect they had taken upon him was to impress upon his mind a more lively sense of the necessity of calling for the interference of the Legislature.

In the year 1793, when the Charter of the Company was renewed, various clauses were introduced into the Act in favour of Private Trade. From the manœuvres of the Directors, however, these were productive of no good effect, and the intentions of the Legislature were completely frustrated. From the increased difficulties thus experienced by individual traders, many representations were made, and at last a Committee was appointed to take the whole subject fully into consideration. A report was by and by published, approving, without qualification, of the conduct of the Directors. By a Court of Proprietors this Report was afterwards confirmed. It was for an account of these proceedings that he had moved last Session of Parliament. It was then too late to discuss them, but he had given notice of his intention to bring the subject before the House as soon as Parliament should again be assembled. That notice he had renewed, and it was not his fault that he had been so long in fulfilling his promise. He was told that a compromise was likely to take place, and he thought it right to see whether justice could be done without an Act of the Legislature.

Legislature. He understood that terms had been offered by the Court of Directors, but these were so unreasonable, so inadequate, to gain the end proposed, that he considered it his duty to remain silent no longer. Whatever might be the opinion of others, to this compromise he could not agree with any regard to the interests, or even the safety of the country.

When the East India Company was first established, in the end of the seventeenth century, the object of the Legislature was two-fold. 1. By the sale of the monopoly to raise a sum of money, the grant of exclusive privileges in trade being in those days an expedient for filling the treasury, often resorted to by the Crown. 2. A second consideration was, that a trade so distant could not be carried on by individuals, but only by a joint stock Company. It was therefore thought that the wants of Government might at once be supplied, and a benefit conferred on the Commerce of the Company.

In the reign of Queen Anne the monopoly was again sold, and a second Company was formed. As they did not go on very well together, a union between them was proposed, and effected, and for this reason the present Company was styled the *United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies*. The monopoly was long preserved with great rigour. It is scarcely possible for individuals to trade by themselves, but every British subject

was prohibited, under severe penalties, from having any concern with a foreign commercial Company trading to the East. For a little while our East India Company went on very well, but then they were only Merchants. Become soon after Victors and Sovereigns, their affairs went to ruin. In fifteen years after their first territorial acquisition their profits had not only entirely ceased, but their losses were so great, that for a rupee, worth 2s. they could get no more than 1s. 3d. This fact they themselves had acknowledged. Indeed, said Sir William, it was not at all matter of surprise. The character of Traders and Sovereigns are inconsistent, and their union has never failed to prove ruinous to the mercantile concerns of these counting-house kings, and to make their unhappy subjects suffer under all the evils of oppression and misrule.

On the ground of the complete incapacity of the Court of the Directors, a Bill was brought into Parliament in the year 1783, to take all power and management out of their hands. I opposed this Bill, because I considered it dangerous and unconstitutional. It went to establish a Board with vast authority and influence, independent of the Crown, to erect *imperium in imperio*. After it had passed this House, and had been read once or twice in the House of Lords, it was happily thrown out. Another corrective was then resorted to, and a Board of Commissioners was appointed, which,

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in various ways, was to check and controul the Court of Directors. No dispatches were allowed to be sent to any of the Presidencies till they had first been communicated to the Board, and the Commissioners received great power over the territorial revenue and the political concerns of the dominions in India. To interfere with matters of Trade, they received no power any farther than to see that the mercantile schemes of the Directors did not interfere with the well-being of the Indian Empire. Things continued in this situation till 1793, when the Charter was to be renewed. Before this it had been perceived that the revenues must fail if native industry was not more encouraged. Foreigners were therefore allowed to trade on the same terms with the Company themselves. The jealousy of British Merchants, however, still remained. Those who had made fortunes in India having thus no means to remit them to England, took the benefit of the Trade allowed to the French, the Danes, the Swedes, and the Americans. Immense profits were thus made by foreigners, and they, from thus being sure of a cargo home, were enabled to export to India with great advantage, and, in many instances, to undersell the Company.

In 1793 the bad policy of this system began to be perceived, and many clauses were introduced to give facility to the Private Trade. Whoever reads the Act must perceive the extreme jealousy

the Legislature entertained of the designs of the Directors. It was well known that the Directors would use their utmost endeavours to obstruct this Trade, but sufficient guards, it was thought, were introduced to protect it in its new immunities. The Directors, nevertheless, have obstructed it materially, and in as far as lay in them, frustrated the intentions of Parliament. The Governors of India uniformly complained of their conduct, and recommended a more liberal system. Sir John Shore, Mr. Hastings, Lord Cornwallis; in short, there is not a single exception. To these remonstrances the Directors obstinately refused to listen, and still declared war against Private Trade, unless it was carried on in a way which prevented all competition with foreigners. In 1798 Marquis Wellesley found it absolutely necessary to send home the produce of India in India-built ships. The number that arrived was very great, yet it never once was pretended that the smallest injury had ensued. The Directors did not even hint at a bad consequence, but sent express orders that this might never be done again. The next year, therefore, the Governor General refused permission for the sailing of any home built ships, but the year after he again found it necessary to employ a considerable number. A strong letter was in consequence wrote out to his Lordship. By way of compliance with his representations, they proposed some advantages to the Private Trade,

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but these concessions were insidious, and would have left them at liberty to hamper it at pleasure. I think it is now time to expose their evasions, and to bring the question fairly to issue before a competent tribunal.

The Trade of the East India Company consists of two branches, that to China, where they are mere Merchants, and that to India, where they are Sovereigns. The first is a profitable, the second a losing Trade. The sales are therefore always confounded. In 1800 they amounted together to about seven millions. Of that there was re-exported 4,700,000l. and of the latter sum there was 2,300,000l. from Private Trade, one half of the whole re-exported. It is allowed that the Foreign Trade to India amounts to 1,500,000l. I believe it to be a great deal more. Ships supposed to be under ballast have been discovered to be richly laden, and various expedients were used to disguise their amount. Of what consequence then, Sir, is the question we are discussing? To this Trade no bounds can be set; a few years back indigo was not known as an article of Commerce between the two countries, and in 1800 we imported indigo to the value of a million sterling. The importation of cotton, and various other commodities, has likewise been wonderfully increased, and it is never to be forgotten, that these are raw materials to exercise our own ingenuity and employ our own industry. The advantages

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to be derived from this Trade are great to a degree, though not yet understood; and shall they all be forfeited from the caprice or illiberality of the Directors? We do not seek to deal in one article in which they deal themselves! It is indeed strange that such a question should ever have been stirred. All this art is used to prevent us from coming into competition, not with the Company, but with foreigners. They say you must be under our controul, you must employ the ships we send out to you, you must submit to many manifest disadvantages, not for our sake, not for the good of the commonwealth; but, lest you should endanger the mercantile gains of France and America. It is said, however, that the Company's sales abroad might be injured. But how can this ever be the case when individual traders never expose the same articles to sale. The Company's sales will be injured, to be sure, by thus labouring to enable foreigners to import the same articles with every advantage. But British subjects constitute the only objects of their jealousy. Rather than allow India-built ships to come home, they will be at a great expence, and send out ships from England. To pretend that they thus place the Private Trader on an equally fair footing is puerile. According to this plan the cargo must be provided long before; the time of the ship's arrival is uncertain, when she may be allowed to be loaded is uncertain, and it is still more uncertain when she

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may be dispatched. Every thing is cramped by arbitrary regulations. But India shipping may be had cheaper! Whether cheaper or not appears to me of little consequence, it has so many advantages in other respects. The goods are provided when the ship is ready, they are immediately put on board, and the ship sets sail with them the moment she is fully loaded. Do consider, Sir, what the Company propose to do. How can they know what goods are to be sent home? How can they proportion the supply of shipping to the demand? Have they not to their utmost wish the power of cramping the speculations of the Merchants? Let them consider the danger they run of losing the Trade of India altogether. It is a well known fact, that in 1793 there were sold in l'Orient alone India goods to the value of 1,200,000l. sterling. How great is the Trade of France alone, then, and how great must be the total of the Trade of Foreigners, when the extent of the dealings with India are considered—Lisbon, America, and the States in the North? I am by no means of opinion that foreigners should be excluded. By these means alone the revenues can be kept up. All I ask is, that these advantages should not be granted to foreigners exclusively. That a proposition so clear should be received like this must indeed confound a stranger. Not only the twenty-four Directors who joined in the Report were decidedly hostile to the plan proposed, but upon a change of the Direction they were supported by the six new

Members

Members who came in, making in all an unanimous body of the thirty persons at the head of affairs. The Proprietors approved of the Report by a large majority, and a ballot served only to shew more unequivocally the ascendency of the Directors. Although there was no secret history in all this, it would by no means be decisive. I have authority to quote against authority. On my side of the question, besides all the Governors General for the last twenty years, I have the late President of the Board of Control. Have these illustrious characters had no opportunity to inquire into the affairs of India, or have they laid down a resolution to overset the Company, and to dissolve our Empire in the East? I dare say the Directors think they are in the right, but I will now shew how they come to think themselves in the right.

When the Company was first established, like the Bank of England and other joint stock companies, the Directors were chosen by those who held a small sum of stock, and the election was annual. The qualification to vote was then only 500l. It was thought the Proprietors interfered too much, and the sum was raised to 1000l. A Bill was then brought in to change the annual elections, and it was enacted, that six should go out in rotation yearly, so that, when once elected, a Member remained in office for four years, and had great facilities given him in naming his successor. The indiscreet interference of the Proprietors

prietors was prevented, to be sure; but it often happens that in attempting to mend one evil, you occasion others of equal consequence. It is clear that ever since the Directors have been self-created, there is but one solitary instance of Gentlemen being brought into the Direction who were not on the House List. They are now a permanent fixed body, and never talk but of going out or coming in by rotation. The Constitution is completely altered; there is now an Aristocracy, a very powerful, and, in my mind, a very dangerous Aristocracy. How is it supported? I do not blame these Gentlemen. The love of power is natural; and no one who has tasted its sweets will willingly descend into a private station. The blame lies with those who allow them to gratify this thirst for domination, and that they are allowed, is indeed much to be regretted. Of all Governments, Aristocracy is the most tyrannical, oppressive, and odious. I abhor it still more than Democracy. I asked how these men kept themselves in power? They have the management of an immense revenue, they have an immense patronage, and ought to have it: I opposed bestowing it on a Board of Commissioners, and I think it could not be possessed safely by the Crown. But this is not all. They have the buying of an immense quantity of goods for India; they have the hiring of vessels to transport them; so that their influence is considerable over the manufacturing,

turing, and unbounded over the shipping interest. All who furnish ships' stores they can favour. When a man's ship is taken up, they tell him, you will take your ropes from such a person, your sails from another we point out, and your anchors from a third. As a proof of all this, I ask, whether many who hear me have not heard it said, "Oh, he is a great man, he is sure to do well, he "has a vote at the India House?"

The Directors do tell the truth when they say, that, by the encouragement of Private Trade, the present Constitution of the Company would be overturned; and when they state this they state the true and the sole ground of their opposition. The Private Traders would get rich, their influence would increase, the dependence of the Proprietors on the Directors would be greatly diminished, and the Aristocracy would tumble to the ground. Here is a very good ground for the opposition of the Court of Directors, but here is nothing which in any degree affects the question itself.

I have stated the reason which actuates the breasts of the Directors; I shall now state the reasons which they assign to others. I shall refer to the Report, which was drawn up by a very honourable and upright man. I never did read a paper drawn up with more address, or that shewed a greater talent at making the worse appear the better reason. While one reads, all appears right,

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and we unequivocally approve the conduct of the Directors; but the moment we lay down the book, and ask ourselves what arguments have been urged against allowing us the full benefit of our Indian Possessions, we are obliged to confess, none, but that you would thus endanger the power of the Court of Directors.

1. The first ostensible argument is, that if these privileges were granted, British Capital would leave the country. But the Company themselves are about to raise two millions, and if there is any danger from that sum being exported, it is fully as great when it is exported by the Company. Sir, I deny that any danger exists. When capital leaves the country and is lost, it is a bad thing; but if it return with a profit, this is the best way it could be employed. The money sent to India will not be given in presents to the Hindoos. It will be employed in buying raw materials to be brought to England, and will thus encourage industry at home and abroad, and add to the strength of the Empire. These Gentlemen tell us this capital might have been employed more profitably. So they think they can judge better of this matter than the owners of this capital. They are to be thanked for their friendly solicitude; but they will probably find that their own affairs will demand all their attention.

2. We have next set before us the terrors of colonization. Upon this point they dwell at great

great length, and with great complacency. But in telling us that the ruin of the country would be the inevitable consequence of any relaxation, they surely forget the nature of the Indian Government. At present no one can go to India without the consent of the Aristocracy, and when he is there the Aristocracy can put him on board a ship and send him home as soon as they have a mind. Without leave of the Government, no one can go beyond a few miles from Calcutta. By a fundamental law no European is capable of holding lands in any part of the Company's possessions. Between India and America no analogy can be drawn, although the separation of that country had been necessary, instead of occasioned by mismanagement. In America the climate resembled that of England, and the Constitution of Government was almost exactly the same. Above all, America was uninhabited, and boundless tracts of fertile land were presented to the industry of the planter. India is one of the most populous countries on the globe, and every inch of ground is appropriate. The climate is so fatal that it is impossible for a European to remain in it alive a few years; the form of Government must be arbitrary, and may be tyrannical. And this is the spot which, after having become a flourishing colony by draining the Mother Country of men and money, will at length break off all connection with us, and become our formidable rival!

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3. But great numbers of Lascars would be brought to London, and being here corrupted, would, on their return home, corrupt their countrymen. They would thus carry a bad report of us to Hindostan; the English character would be degraded, and the English Empire in the East shaken to its foundations. All this is really urged with gravity. Would it not be possible to prevent the Lascars from ever entering London? We trade to China; but our men are not allowed an unrestrained intercourse with the Chinese. It would be an easy matter, at a small expence, to superintend the Lascars when on shore, and though the expence should be considerable, the profits of the Trade would be amply able to bear it. It is a curious fact, Sir, that the Company are daily in the practice of bringing home Lascars, and if I am rightly informed, those they do bring home are allowed to wander about the streets, and to die for want, while those brought home by the Private Traders live on shore in a kind of barracks prepared for them, and are watched over with the greatest care.

4. The Shipping Interest would suffer. Sir, if I am rightly informed, the Shipping Interest are by no means adverse to the plan. The price of timber in this country is now so enormous that there is scarcely any profit to be made by building ships, while there is a great deal to be made by repairing them. If Trade increases, and the

number of ships entering our ports is increased, they therefore justly think they would ultimately be gainers.

5. An argument still more formidable is, that the British Sailors would be injured. In all cases where they are to be found, the Merchants are willing to employ British Sailors in preference. It is their interest to do so. Seven British Sailors are supposed to be equal to twelve Lascars, and though some give a different proportion, all agree in making the difference prodigious. Thus the loss of tonnage when Lascars are employed, more than counterbalances the cheapness of their wages. The Merchants are willing that a clause should be introduced, enacting that, when they are to be found, a part or the whole of the crew shall be English, and that the certificates of the impossibility of finding them shall be given by the Court of Directors, or the Council at the Presidencies in India. If this Trade is placed under proper regulations, it will afford encouragement to a prodigious number of our marines, it will greatly increase their number, and in case of a new war, will add materially to our maritime strength. Upon the commencement of hostilities, Lascars can be employed as substitutes, and without any interruption to our Commerce, an immense number of hands can be given to the navy. This is an advantage not to be derived from the Trade to the West Indies, or any other Colonial Trade on the

the Globe. The admission of India-built Ships cannot be objected to, if it were for no other reason than the present scarcity in this country of timber for the navy. The deficiency begins to be felt to a most alarming degree. But the wood of which these ships are built is preferable to the best oak, and it can be imported for all purposes free of expence, in the form of a ship. In the opinion of the Court of Directors, a grand national object like this is to be sacrificed, because it would interfere with selfish views! [*A loud cry of hear! hear! from all parts of the House.*] During the war the trade of foreigners to India has had to struggle with considerable difficulties. Now that Peace has arrived, we shall have not only our former rivals, but France and Holland, and there will be few obstacles to their being assisted by British capital, if, through the unhappy influence of a few Merchants in Leadenhall-street, it is not allowed to be employed at home. France has all her Colonies restored to her. There is no clause in the Treaty to say that she shall not trade in the Indian Seas. There could be none; and the only way in which we can prevent our Commerce being wrested from us, is to free it from every unreasonable restraint. If foreigners are once allowed to get possession of it, we may discover our error only in time to find it irretrievable. Now we may secure to ourselves this inexhaustible fund of wealth; but if we un-

precedentedly allow it to slip from us, it is gone for ever. Whenever our Commerce is ruined, we shall have no other consolation than that we have preserved the sacred band of thirty Directors. It likewise ought never to be forgotten, that all that leaves our scale falls into the scale of France, so that the loss acts doubly against us.

I could say much more, but I think I have said enough to prove the propriety of my Motion. I do not wish the House to come to a decision now. Let the whole business be submitted to a Committee, and sifted to the bottom. I wish that an opportunity should be given to contradict my inferences. It will then be seen whether we are not unnecessarily weakening ourselves, and aggrandizing our enemies; whether we are not doing every thing to discourage Manufactures and to cramp Trade; whether we are not wantonly shutting up sources of revenue and national strength; and whether, if these manœuvres prevail, the sales in Leadenhall-street themselves will not soon be unattended. Sir, I am sure that this subject will force itself on Parliament; and that, though this Motion be rejected, it will not determine the fate of the measure. The sentiments of the people in this country are not to be resisted; they are a people not to be kept in the dark, and who, when facts are submitted to them, seldom fail to come to a right conclusion. I have not a doubt, therefore,

fore, that the necessity of this measure will soon be universally felt, and that the Legislature will be compelled to adopt it.

The worthy Baronet concluded by moving:

"That a Committee be appointed to take into "consideration the Papers laid upon the Table last "Session of Parliament, relating to the Proceed-"ings with regard to the Trade between England "and the East Indies, and to report their opinion "thereon to the House."

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER then rose, and began by professing that no Member of the House could possibly attach greater importance than he did to the subject now under discussion. He was ready, too, to admit, in the most unequivocal terms, that the honourable Baronet who had brought forward the motion, was actuated by the purest and most disinterested sense of duty, while he allowed with pleasure that he had conducted the discussion of a subject so extremely interesting with that candour and good sense which could not fail to have excited universal approbation. The honourable Baronet had traced with great accuracy the history of the East India Company, from the earliest period of its establishment down to the present moment; and he had nothing on this head to object to the correctness of his details. It was unnecessary for him to reply to a variety of the arguments which

the honourable Baronet had used, both because they did not materially differ from the sentiments he himself entertained, and because they were not immediately connected with the subject before the House. He should therefore confine himself wholly to this subject, and in doing so he should first of all advert to the provisions adopted in 1793, when the House had renewed the Charter of the East India Company. The Private Trade, it was to be recollected, had not been publicly acknowledged previous to that period, and it was in 1793 for the first time that it became the subject of legislative enactment, that it was formally recognized, and that special provisions were made for giving new facilities to its extension. At this time the Company were bound to furnish 3000 tons for the importation of the articles embarked of this Trade into this country. This allowance had happily been found to be far from being equal to the purpose in view; but those who had framed this Act, foreseeing that such an allowance would be inadequate, had lodged in the hands of Commissioners the power of enlarging it to that amount which circumstances should require. The framers of this Bill had indeed discovered throughout the whole conduct of the business that knowledge, that wisdom, that enlargement of mind, by which they were so eminently distinguished; and in the provisions they had adopted, they had endeavoured to give this Private Trade all those facilities

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which might at once be perfectly consistent with the interests of the Company, while they afforded every reasonable degree of encouragement to the efforts of private speculation. If, therefore, it could be made to appear that the Court of Directors had not given this Trade all the facilities which Parliament had wished and intended, a fair ground of Parliamentary interference would be opened, and he would be the last man in the House to attempt to prevent such an interference. He had no bias whatever in favour of either of the parties; and all that he wished was a fair, candid, and impartial consideration of the subject. Agreeing most cordially with the honourable Baronet in the expediency of giving every possible degree of facility to the Private Trade, he trusted that if, from what had been stated, he should be enabled to draw an opposite conclusion, the House would be disposed to come to a corresponding decision, and this trust, he was sure, he did not indulge in vain.

Having said so much in the way of preliminary observation, he now proceeded more directly to the discussion before the House.

The honourable Baronet had said that every Governor in India, without exception, was in favour of the Private Trade, conducted on the principles which he had laid down, but whence he had been able to collect this, he professed himself unable to discover. Unquestionably it was true that

his noble friend, Marquis Wellesley, had, by the exercise of his discretionary power, and by using extraordinary exertions, employed several India-built Ships, in 1798, for bringing to Europe the articles of Private Trade. An order from the Court of Directors was sent out by the next fleet prohibiting the importation of any more goods in that way, and in 1799 the practice was discontinued. Since that time it was renewed, and he had now the satisfaction of stating that the Court of Directors had agreed to allow India Shipping for the purposes of the ensuing season. They had even gone farther; and had consented that the Shipping employed in the Red Sea should be appropriated to the conveyance of the Private Trade for 1803. Thus they had not only agreed to confirm the determination of Marquis Wellesley, but had expressed their willingness to employ a large proportion of Shipping exclusively for the benefit of the Private Trade, and were even engaged to furnish additional Shipping, if the Trade of 1803 should require a larger proportion than that which they had assigned.

From this statement, therefore, the House would perceive that the private trader would experience no inconvenience, no loss, no disadvantage whatever, till 1804, even if no new regulations were to be adopted, while sufficient time was allowed to form every regulation which might seem to be demanded by an impartial contemplation of the whole

whole of the circumstances connected with so interesting a subject. This he now mentioned to the House, both with a wish that the intentions of the Court of Directors might be distinctly understood, and that, after going through the statements which he should be under the necessity of doing, he might found upon it an argument in support of the motion with which he meant to conclude, the motion for the previous question. An inquiry into a subject so intricate and so extensive as that now before them, the House would not wish unnecessarily to enter upon; it was not his wish to institute it but from the fullest conviction that it was imperiously called for by circumstances. A good deal of stress had been laid on the opinion of a person, for whose opinion on this subject he certainly did entertain the highest respect, and whose opinion could not fail to have a very powerful influence, both in the House and the country. It was, however, only that morning that he had read the letter of the right honourable Gentleman, in which he not only did not intirely coincide with the opinions expressed by the honourable Baronet, but expressly asserted that the opinions of the two opposite parties were founded in extremes, and recommended a middle course, with which, with one exception, he most heartily concurred. He asserted that the opinion of the Court of Directors was erroneous, but it did not appear from the letter that he was prepared to adopt in

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all their latitude the opinions which the honourable Baronet had adopted. Laying aside, however, the consideration of authority from opinions however respectable, the first question now before the House was, whether the Court of Directors had given those facilities, which by the decision of Parliament they were required to extend to the Private Trade? He was ready to declare his opinion on this point, and to state that they had not given the facilities required. The next subject of consideration was, whether or not there existed a just expectation that these facilities would be extended in future? In directing the attention of the House to these points, he wished that the nature of the trade in question might be fully understood by the House. The capital employed in the trade, it would be recollected, was not drawn from this country, but was a capital composed of the surplus of the salaries enjoyed by the different servants of the Company in India. This surplus was either vested in the treasury of the Company, and bills to the amount drawn on England, or it was vested in goods which constituted the trade which the House was at present considering. The amount of this surplus had gradually increased, and the investments in the Private Trade had experienced a proportional increase. In carrying on this trade the honourable Baronet had contended that British subjects were not allowed those advantages which were given to the foreign trader.

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On examination, however, he was convinced that this assertion would be found to be groundless. To ascertain this it was only necessary to attend a little to the manner in which the trade was conducted. No persons were, it was true, allowed to engage in it who were not licensed by the Company, and they were prevented from buying goods formed of the choicest materials, and manufactured in the richest manner. Saltpetre too formed an exception to the articles which they were permitted in the first instance to purchase. But the House would consider that this exclusion with regard to fine goods, referred only to the period prior to the supply of the ships of the Company with these articles. After this supply was obtained, the market was open to the private traders, and the previous exclusion ceased to operate. They might then purchase, not merely the rough part of the goods, but had free access to those of the richest materials and the most costly manufacture. With the exceptions he had specified, every other branch of manufactures, and every other article of produce, were within the range of their purchase. Such was the situation in which the private traders were placed, and he knew no difference with respect to foreigners, except that it was not necessary for them to be licensed previous to their engaging in the Private Trade. They enjoyed no other privilege which was not participated by British subjects, and therefore he was at a loss

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to conceive what these advantages were which the honourable Baronet had described to be in the possession of foreigners. But here the honourable Baronet had stated an object to be gained by the Private Trade, and a most important national object it was, an object no less than that of facilitating, by means of ships built in India, the supply of timber for the commercial and royal navy of this country.

The honourable Gentleman had dwelt very strongly on this point, and had been extremely anxious to shew, that there was no other means of so effectually promoting this great object. It was his duty, in answer to this, to state, that the Court of Directors had expressed in the strongest terms their anxiety to give every possible facility to any measure calculated for the advantage of the royal navy; they were even willing to engage, and to bind themselves to the fulfilment of their engagement, to use every effort to cheapen the price of ships, if any should be built for the use of the navy, by loading those ships on their own account to England, and deducting the amount of their freight from their original cost, in order to render them by so much the cheaper to the public. The price of ship timber within a few years had increased in a most extraordinary manner, and every plan for effecting a reduction was deserving of the most serious attention. With respect to the use of ships built in India for the Private Trade, he had

to remark, that this was one of the cases in which the opinions on the subject proceeded to extremes. It was the opinion of his noble Friend the Governor General of India, and of a right honourable Gentleman whose sentiments he had already alluded to, that ships built in India should be employed in the trade; and this was the point in which a difference of opinion might arise, while it was as strenuously maintained, in Mr. Grant's report, that the trade should be exclusively confined to British ships. He had now, however, a high degree of pleasure in being enabled to state to the House that the Directors had, on a full and serious consideration of the subject, agreed that either British ships or those built in India, if attended with equal convenience, should be employed, their only objection being with regard to the price. In calculating the comparative expence of British and India-built ships, the honourable Gentleman had founded his calculations on a state of war; but, was it fair to assume, that during a period of peace this expence would not be diminished? It certainly was not; and this was another reason, in his mind, for opposing the motion of the honourable Gentleman, that time might be allowed to try the experiment for two years, for which the provision already made afforded a favourable opportunity. By recommending delay, he trusted that he should not be thought indifferent to the importance of the question before the House. The

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trade was unquestionably of very high consequence. While the trade opened a channel for the importation of the branches of Indian manufactures, and the articles of Indian produce, which the Company had not the means of introducing on their own account, and while it enabled those of the Company's servants who had a certain portion of capital to dispose of, to dispose of it in an advantageous manner, it on the other hand presented new openings for the commerce, and new encouragements to the manufactures of the Mother Country. It was a trade not only attended with great advantages, but accompanied with little risk. It was a trade which took little capital from this country, which in its consequences was calculated to make London the *emporium* of the trade of India. At present, indeed, London might be in some degree considered in this light, but by the new facilities which this trade would give to commerce in general, it would render London almost the sole mart of the whole Indian commerce. He felt unwilling to follow the honourable Baronet through all the strictures he had made on the Report of the Court of Directors, but he thought it necessary to advert to a few of the points discussed in the Report itself. What was said by Mr. Grant on the consequences which would flow from the employment of Lascars in the navigation of ships coming from India, appeared to his mind extremely feeble and inconclusive. That foreign seamen might,

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without the smallest impropriety, occasionally come in aid of British sailors, could not possibly be denied; but that there was any reasonable fear of the foreigners supplanting the British subjects, was a proposition to which he could not accede. It was impossible with the least regard to reason and experience to imagine, that, known as the superior skill and intrepidity of British seamen were, their services would be refused for the services of another description of men, whose qualifications were confessedly inferior in every thing connected with their profession. On the subject of colonization, he was not equally prepared to agree with the honourable Baronet; and though perhaps he did not view the danger from this source in a light so strong as that exhibited in the Report, yet he was ready to confess, that it struck him as a matter of no small consideration. He thought it an object of high importance to prevent an increase of settlers in India, and to discourage every plan which was designed to increase them. He admitted that the cases of America and our settlements in India were not parallel, but at the same time he thought that our experience in America ought at least to have the effect of teaching us caution. On the contemplation of the whole question, he did not think that the honourable Baronet had made out such a case as could be considered by the House as a full and fair ground for instituting an enquiry. He had, he could with truth assure the House, no

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bias on his mind which would lead him to oppose such an enquiry, if it really appeared to him to be necessary; and till the Court of Directors had shewn a disposition to grant what was due to the interest of the Private Trade, he felt a strong disposition to give his support to the motion. By saying he was inclined to support the motion, he did not mean to refer to the specific motion of the honourable Baronet, but he was ready to support any fair proposition for compelling the Court of Directors to comply with the wishes of Parliament as expressed in the act of 1793, to grant to the Private Trade every necessary degree of facility. But seeing a disposition existing in the Court of Directors to come to an amicable arrangement, seeing the great inconveniences which might attend the investigation of a subject so extremely complicated and extensive, the end of which too it was quite impossible to ascertain, and seeing that from the provisions adopted for the next two years no inconvenience could arise to the Private Merchants from a short delay, he felt it his duty to move the previous question.

Mr. JOHNSTONE said, that if there ever had been discovered any disposition on the part of the Court of Directors to agree to an amicable arrangement of the dispute with the Private Merchants, the present motion would have been unnecessary, and would never have been brought forward for the consideration

consideration of the House. The object of the motion was merely to put to fair trial the plan which the Marquis Wellesley had sanctioned, and acted upon in his conduct of the Private Trade. But if, as the Right Honourable Gentleman has stated, this plan is to be fully and fairly put to the test for three years, this was all that was asked for, and the Private Merchants would be perfectly satisfied with such a proposal. Was, however, any such disposition apparent on the face of the papers on the table? It certainly was not, and hence had originated the necessity of the motion. The Right Honourable Gentleman, when mentioning the subject of the concession offered by the Court of Directors, did not seem to him perfectly to understand the nature of the concession to be granted. He had thought that the ships in the Red Sea would be amply sufficient for every purpose of the Private Trade in 1803; but for his part he could not help being of a different opinion, and he would state to the House on what this opinion was founded. The House would recollect that 40,000 tons of shipping had been originally employed in conveying the division of the Indian army up the Red Sea. Of these 20,000 tons had already returned to different ports in India, and of the other half that remained a number of ships were disabled, while others were discharged, and would come home in the ensuing season. So that taking this view of the subject, he was afraid that out of the

20,000 tons which were remaining, and might be appropriated for the use of the Private Trade in 1803, there would not be a number of disposeable ships sufficient to bring home the property of that season. He wished to know, then, if such a deficiency should exist, and if the ships destined for this special service were inadequate, individuals would be permitted to send home their property in other ships?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER in explanation stated, that the Court of Directors wished to have it distinctly understood, that if contrary to every reasonable expectation, the shipping employed in the Red Sea should not be sufficient to bring home all the private property for the year 1803, they would instruct their agents in India to provide whatever additional shipping might be wanted. He added, that the provision in favour of the Private Trade was for two, not three seasons.

Mr. JOHNSTONE professed himself obliged to the Right Honourable Gentleman for his explanation, but could not help expressing his sorrow, that instead of three, the provision in behalf of the Private Merchants was only for two seasons. There seemed to be a wish among the enemies of the regulations in favour of the Private Trade, to represent the plan now so strongly resisted by the Court

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of Directors as altogether new; but he was anxious to press on the House that the plan was not new, but had been pursued in several seasons since 1796, when the Governor-General of India had acted upon it, by sending home private property in ships built in the country. After the trial it had already undergone, he defied any one of its most violent opponents to point out a single inconvenience that had arisen from it, or was likely to arise from its further continuance. It had received the support of every one of the Company's servants in India, who not merely saw no bad effects resulting from it, but had seen and acknowledged the beneficial effects it was calculated to produce. This had been the decided opinion of Mr. Udney, who, for his eminent services, was raised to be a Member of the Supreme Council. Mr. Myers, who had been many years Accountant-General, had viewed it in the same light, and received the honour of a vote of thanks for his good conduct from the Court of Directors. The Right Honourable Gentleman had remarked, that Mr. Dundas's letter insisted a good deal on the supposed opinion of that Right Honourable Gentleman, that the sentiments of both parties were in extremes, and that he was desirous of following a middle course in the adjustment of the dispute. But if the Right Honourable Gentleman would take the trouble to examine the letter more attentively, he would find, that Mr. Dundas was there not alluding to the question be-

fore the House, but to the opinions of two parties, one of whom wished the Trade to be wholly laid open, and the other that it should be subjected to still closer restraints. These were the opinions which he had declared to be in extremes; and he was for a middle course, that of Lord Wellesley, which was neither more nor less than the plan contended for by the Private Traders. His approbation of the plan he had fully expressed, and he had never varied in the smallest degree from his original opinion.

There was another point in the Right Honourable Gentleman's speech to which he begged leave to advert. The Right Honourable Gentleman seemed to think that the Private Trade was solely a trade of remittance, and that the capital was made up of the savings of the salaries of the different servants of the Company in India. This was, however, an exceedingly erroneous idea of the nature and extent of this important branch of Trade. He believed that his statement would not be greatly deficient in accuracy, if he estimated the whole amount of these savings to be a million and a half yearly. Now it was known that the Company had bills drawn on Europe to this amount, and thus the whole of the sum, which was to form the capital of the Private Trade, was completely absorbed. The truth was, that the facilities of navigation had opened a variety of new channels, and the East Indies would have to receive,

ceive, at no remote period, a larger balance in specie. The Private Trade, independent of all the concerns of the Company, could not now be estimated at less than an annual sum of from four millions and a half to five millions sterling. It had been asked, by the Right Honourable Gentleman, what were the advantages which foreigners possessed in carrying on this Trade above British subjects? Undoubtedly, if the plan of Marquis Wellesley was to be acted upon, and if the private property of British traders was to be sent home in ships of the country instead of ships sent out by the Company, foreigners would possess no advantage. But, on the other hand, if the plan was given up, and if the Company were to send out ships to bring home private property, and if they were to be allowed to assort and manage the cargoes as heretofore, these checks went as certainly to put the British Merchant in a far worse situation than that in which the foreigner was placed.

On the subject of colonization he had only a few words to offer; and though it might seem to contradict the sentiments he had been endeavouring to support, he had no hesitation in saying, that he was decidedly hostile to any system which would attempt to colonize our Eastern possessions. Our Empire in the East was originally founded on fear, and if individuals spread themselves over the country, the respect of the natives would be diminished, and the European character, from familiarity,

liarity, might be degraded in the eyes of the natives. But he had the satisfaction to reflect that such a system was altogether useless. The only use of Europeans in India was to act as the medium of communication betwixt the Merchants who were the consumers here, and the Natives by whom the articles of commerce were produced. So far was he, therefore, from wishing to increase the number of Europeans in India, that he was convinced the number might be less than it was, even according to the present arrangement. The provisions made in favour of the Private Trade for the next two years, were important and satisfactory, but he was quite at a loss to know what course was to be followed in the third year. If it was intended that the same system should be continued, this would be a source of confidence to the Private Merchants; but if, on the other hand, it was merely an indulgence for two years, it could not fail to give rise to very great alarm. The Merchants, once deprived of confidence, and allowed to carry on their trade only under vexatious restrictions, it was easy to foresee what course they would be disposed to adopt. Driven out of a share of an advantageous Trade, by the narrow spirit of monopoly in this country, they had only the alternative of going to some free port on the Continent, and prosecute, without molestation, their commercial pursuits. They had only to go to Antwerp, procure the necessary pass, sail for Calcutta,

Calcutta, and take in with full liberty that cargo which they were prevented from loading in the ships of avowed British Subjects.

In answer to the Honourable Gentleman's enquiry about the mode of management to be adopted after the expiration of the two years, for which provision is already made, the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* read a series of propositions from the Court of Directors, which they offered as the basis of a system of good understanding and harmony betwixt them, and those interested in the private trade. They were as follow:

I. That in addition to the quantity of three thousand tons of shipping, now annually allotted to the exports of individuals from India, three, four, or five thousand tons more, or as much as may be wanted, shall be assigned.

II. That the shipping to be thus annually employed shall be wholly applied to the use of Private Traders, and shall neither be destined nor detained for political or warlike services in India; but sail from thence directly for the port of London at fixed periods, within the fair weather season.

III. That all commodities of the produce of the Continent or of the British territories in India, shall be permitted to be laden on those ships; excepting only piece goods, which shall not be laden, unless by special licence

from the Company, or their Governments abroad; and saltpetre, which any of the Governments in India shall have the power to prohibit or restrain.

IV. That the goods to be exported on private account, be, as now, received into the Company's warehouses in India; and that the same care be taken in affording them into cargoes, in due proportions of light and heavy goods, according to the deliveries into the warehouses, as is observed in forming the Company's own cargoes.

V. That these goods shall be brought to the Company's warehouses in London, and thence to their sales, in the regular order, subject to the charge of 3 per cent. now allowed to the Company, for landing, warehousing and selling private goods.

VI. That when the private goods provided for exportation from India shall not serve to fill all the ships sent out for them, the Company shall put gruff goods into those ships on their own account.

VII. That no person shall be permitted to embark in this Trade as principal or agent, except such as may lawfully engage therein according to the provisions of the Act of the 33d George III. cap. 52.

VIII. That the ships to be employed in this service shall be built for the purpose, either in Great Britain

Britain or India, the Company contracting with those who shall undertake to build or be the owners of them, for their service during eight voyages; and that the construction of them shall be agreeable to a plan already adopted by the Company in England, for ships intended to carry their own gruff goods.

IX. That in order to ascertain the rates at which ships of this construction built of teak can be obtained for six, seven, or eight voyages certain in India, the Court will authorize their Governments there immediately to advertise for such a number of ships of the above description, as are likely to be required, and to engage them for the Company, provided the freight demanded shall not exceed the rate of those lately contracted for in England.

X. Or ships already built in India may be tendered to the Governments in India for two or more voyages, for the purpose of carrying the Private Trade, if they shall not exceed the rate of peace freight actually paid by the Company for ships of the like description this season; and provided they are in all respects approved by their master attendants, or other proper officers in India. Provided that nothing herein contained shall be construed to make void any contract or agreement into which

which the Company may have already entered; or to prevent the Company from taking up hereafter or contracting to build, ships in Great Britain, on equal or more advantageous terms than those of India.

XI. That the above ships shall be re-let by the Company without profit, to such Merchants as may be disposed to export goods to India, or to import goods from India, as above described; charging to the exporter and importer respectively such proportion only of the total freight for the voyage as shall be due, according to the proportion established by the act of the 33d George III. cap. 52.

Mr. JOHNSTONE thought these propositions quite unsatisfactory, and maintained that they differed in nothing from the original resolution of the Court of Directors, but in this, that the ships bringing home private property from India might be dispatched from India, whereas, by the original propositions, these ships were all to be sent from England. He canvassed the propositions at some length, and finished by declaring his conviction, that if the Private Trade was to encounter such severe checks, and labour under such vexatious regulations, the Surplus Trade would go out of our hands, and be carried on under Danish, French, and other foreign colours.

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The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, on the other hand, urged that these propositions were merely designed to form the basis of an arrangement; but this by no means precluded any subsequent modifications. He maintained also that the grand difference between the present and the former propositions was, that the present allowed private property to be brought home in India-built ships; whereas the former resolutions denied this indulgence.

Mr. WALLACE said, the statement of his Right Honourable Friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had reduced the question to a very narrow point. The proposition of the Honourable Baronet was evidently calculated, through the medium of a Committee purporting to examine merely the claims of Private Traders, to introduce a discussion relative to every part of the Indian affairs, which should be guarded against with the strongest jealousy at this time, particularly when men's minds were warmed, when so many wild notions were entertained, when the most extravagant speculations were indulged respecting the India Company, which struck at the root of that establishment. The principle upon which he should vote in opposition to the Honourable Baronet's proposal was, that he held it to be a direct attack upon the Charter of the India Company, without any plea of justice or necessity. This might ren-

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der him liable to the charge of inconsistency, in consequence of his conduct at the Board of Control; but he wished to explain the nature of that conduct. That Board had taken up the subject of Private Trade; but scarcely had they entered into the investigation, when the Honourable Baronet moved for the Papers on the table, which induced the Board to suspend their proceedings, (perceiving, from that motion, that it was intended to introduce the question to Parliament) in order that it might come free and unfettered before the House. The right of the Board of Control to interfere in this question, he understood, had been doubted, on the ground that it was a commercial question; but, from the Act of 1793, it was manifested that the Board of Control was invested with powers sufficient to justify their interference in the arrangements of a subject of so much national importance as that before the House, though it excluded them from meddling with the commercial concerns of the India Company.

The opinion of Mr. Dundas, which, upon all occasions, was entitled to respect and reverence, was confidently quoted in this discussion, but, in his judgment, the opinion of that Right Honourable Gentleman went to an extent for which no reason was advanced, or he believed could be advanced to warrant. He for one was not prepared to go so far, though he admitted, in a great degree, the claims of the English Merchants resident in India.

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From the Papers on the table he drew his principal argument against the motion of the Honourable Baronet; for it appeared, that the India Company could not be bound to allow the private trading at all beyond the amount of that settled by the Act of 1793, unless it was intended glaringly to entrap their Charter. In fact, however the motion might be disguised, or dressed up, it would tend to put the spirit of the Act of 1793 in opposition to its express letter; and to introduce a question between public faith and public expediency. The principles upon which that Act was founded, he stated to be, to procure the market of India to the merchandize and manufactures of the British Empire exclusively; to maintain the influence and power of the India Company as interwoven with the power of the country, by securing to them alone the communication between India and Europe. At that time a Private Trade did exist, under the patronage of the Company, but in a crippled state. It was enlarged, and wisely, for many reasons. From the state of timber in India, and the demand here, it was desirable that India-built ships might be allowed to import it into Great Britain. It was also desirable, as the Marquis of Wellesley had so laudably endeavoured, to exclude foreign influence, to prevent the effects of foreign intrigue, and the aggrandizement of foreign power in India. That was the policy which saved India from the machinations of France.

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Now that by the Treaty of Peace the French establishments were restored, it was more necessary than ever to persevere in that system; and by giving facility to the Trade of India with this country, we should make the foreign factories scarce worth maintaining.

With respect to the danger apprehended from Colonization in India, it was the most chimerical and absurd that could be imagined. Was it reasonable to entertain any such apprehensions in a country under the direction of a Government so powerful, and supported by an immense army? He shewed that the extension of the Private Trade would be for the advantage of the India Company, by stating, that in 1798 the profit on the India Company's own Trade was but 2l. 6s. 9d. per cent. whereas in 1800 it amounted to 35l. As to the representation, that the report which the Lascars might give in India of their British connections in Wapping, tending to subvert the British dominions in India, or to reduce the British character, it was too ridiculous to deserve a serious answer. He was not inclined to join with those who supposed that these Lascars would ever be preferred to British seamen, for one obvious reason, that they were not so cheap to the Merchant; and it was unnecessary to add, less skilful. Indeed it was not by any means probable that British Merchants would prefer any foreign seaman to those of his own country, would ungratefully refuse

fuse employment to him who had exposed himself to all the toils and dangers of war, to give peace to his country. If, however, it should so happen, it would be for the Legislature to interfere, and to take care that every nursery for our sailors should be preserved; that the marine of foreigners should not be advanced by British capital; that Antwerp, a port so much talked of as likely to partake of the Trade to India, should not receive that wealth which might hereafter be employed against us, by that power which God and Nature had to a certain degree made our enemy, *(a cry of hear! hear!)* and enable them to contest with us the sovereignty of the seas. He applauded the disposition manifested by the India Company to adjust the dispute with the Private Traders, and hoped the plan proposed for the two ensuing years would prove a satisfactory experiment, and serve as the basis of some future arrangement, calculated to call forth all the energy of commerce in that department, and to advantage the country. If the Honourable Gentleman who supported the motion of the Honourable Baronet, had examined the state of the India Trade, he would have found, that the shipping in the Red Sea, consisting of 20,000 tons, was likely to be more than sufficient for the proposed importation of the India produce in Private Trade in 1803, when it was recollected, that the whole tonnage of Bengal, during the last season, did not exceed 7,000 tons, and yet the

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Marquis of Wellesley will be authorized, if necessary, to employ more shipping; therefore all the suggestions which had been thrown out as to the probability of foreigners partaking of our Indian commerce, from want of shipping of our own to import the surplus of India produce, was entirely groundless. With these views of the subject, he would ever give his most decided opposition to any proposal endangering the establishment of the India Company, convinced that its existence, through the medium of a well regulated monopoly, was essential to the security of the state; and that the transfer of the authority it possessed to the Government, would give it a degree of overawing power, that would render the existence of the Constitution itself extremely precarious.

Sir FRANCIS BARING (a Director) rose, he said, very reluctantly to obtrude himself upon the attention of the House, on a question which seemed already to have been so ably discussed by the Right Honourable Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) and the honourable Member who spoke last. But upon a subject of so much importance, and in which he was personally and officially interested, he hoped the House would indulge him in a few short observations.

The honourable Baronet who introduced this question called it a commercial one, and materially involving the trading rights of this country, but

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he would beg leave to term it a question in support of the claims of an illegitimate description of traders against the interests and chartered rights of a legal and legitimate body, whose interests and whose objects must of necessity participate in those of the Empire; for, in fact, under the former description only could he estimate those men in India from whom originated this question. They were children rising against their parents, servants labouring to subvert the interests of their masters. Creatures who owed every thing they possessed to the patronage, protection, and support of that very Company, whose legal authority and legitimate interest they now sought to subvert, under the pretence of vindicating the commercial rights of British Subjects; but in reality with a view to convert this country into a colony, and India into a mother country, and to lay the foundation of future subversion to the institution of the India Company, which the Legislature of this Country had so long cherished and supported, on the fullest conviction of its importance to the strength, wealth and prosperity of the British Empire. For who, he would ask, were those reputable authorities, from whom the honourable Baronet who introduced this Motion, derived his information on this subject, but the Servants of the Company in India, who owed every thing they possessed to that Company, and their correspondents in this country, conniving with them to wrest, if possible,

all the advantage of India Commerce out of the hands of its legal possessors?

The honourable Baronet had termed the Court of Directors a Court of Aristocracy, whose authority was as dangerous to the true interests of the Company, as it was to those of this Country, in relation to the possession of India. But he begged leave to vindicate the Directors from such a charge —as one of that respectable body, instead of assuming so high and mighty an authority as the honourable Baronet was pleased to attribute, he felt indeed a very humble sense of his situation, and regarded it only as one in which he participated the duty of watching over the interests and commercial rights of Traders to India, residents in this country, and in the exercise of which duty he and his colleagues were bound by the letter of an Act of Parliament.

Upon the introduction of the Act of 1793 for renewing the Charter of the India Company, a principal object avowed by Parliament was the promotion of the interest of the Manufacturers of Great Britain and Ireland; and on the part of the Company it was earnestly desired that the parties interested would come forward and state what they wanted, and even what they wished, in order that every reasonable claim might be complied with to their satisfaction. The consequence of which was, that a stipulation was brought forward by the Right Honourable Gentleman who introduced

introduced that Bill, (Mr. Dundas) a man than whom none was more fully competent to frame a Bill upon that particular subject, which required that 3000 tons of shipping should be taken up by the Company for the purpose of carrying the Private Trade to India, and bringing back produce in return. To this the Directors fully agreed, and even declared their own indifference as to the nation of which such ships should be, whether Irish or English; but if any description of ships was to be proposed, subversive of the principle which was to make the River Thames the medium of reception, or on board of which British Seamen were not to be the navigators, the Directors were prepared decidedly to reject. Any departure from this principle would have been injurious to the interests of the British Navy. But if this stipulation was not made, the persons in India, from whom the present question originated, would have decidedly rejected British Ships, have preferred their own teak vessels, and thus, instead of Commerce being confined to the Thames for promoting the interests of British Manufactures, such ships might have made use of them to carry on a Trade with all the ports in Europe.

Such was the conduct of the Servants of the Company in India, who have made their fortunes under the protection of the Company. But what was the pretence of those persons in employing India-built vessels instead of British? That they

could supply Europe with the produce of India upon terms considerably cheaper. But what was the proof on the contrary? Why that Mr. Pellier, a French Agent, had offered the Company to pay a price for their commodities on the spot adequate to ten per cent. over and above the investment price, and to convey them to Europe in French bottoms. How then could any individual in the Private Trade pretend that he could supply France with India commodities cheaper than the India Company?

With respect to the nature of the homeward India Trade, it was, he said, divided under three distinct heads, viz. First, the Foreign Trade. Secondly, the Private Trade to the River Thames. Thirdly, the Company's own Trade. By the last returns at the India House, it appeared, that the Private Trade had increased within the last two years two or 300,000l.; the foreign in a still greater proportion; but it was uniformly found that the Trade of the Company decreased, as that of the Private Traders advanced; and consequently their commercial interests were injured, not by foreigners, but by their own servants. The Foreign Trade, in fact, had increased of late years more than ever—but with this difference, that not a single article of foreign manufacture was consumed in our India Settlements, silver only being the article in exchange for the commodities of the country, while British Manufactures were the only articles

articles of European consumption, and taken in exchange for the produce brought home to England. The Portuguese in particular, Sir Francis said, only last year had carried out specie to the amount of 400,000l. and had exported India goods in return considerably short of that amount, and this he believed to be really Portuguese, and not British property.

With respect to Shipping, he begged leave to state the reason why the growth of ship-timber in this country was not great was, because there was not a competition sufficient for its encouragement. The Navy Board held out no adequate inducement for country gentlemen to grow their timber to an extraordinary size, and therefore they cut it down only at that size, when by competition between the Navy and the Private Ship-Builders they were sure of a good price; but he was convinced the proposed importation of bringing large ships from India to supply our Navy, was to place the English country gentlemen in a still worse state than before, with regard to the growth of timber.

With respect to the employment of Lascars in preference to British Seamen, such an idea he believed was too ridiculous to require refutation; but with respect to that description of seamen brought to this country by the homeward-bound ships from India, the difference was this: the India Company alone had provided for them an establishment, affording them maintenance and

protection, and insured them return to their native country; whereas it was the interest, and seemingly the object of the Private Trader to induce them to desert, and then abandon them to their fate, insomuch that of the number of Lascars employed by Private Traders, not twenty in a hundred got back to India in such a state of health as to be able ever afterwards to earn a livelihood: that it was true that the Company were in some instances obliged to employ Lascars themselves, but that was owing to the misconduct of these Private Traders, who constantly enticed away the British Seamen from the Europe ships. The Directors of the India Company acted on the whole of this business, not from any impulse of private interest, but from a sense of public duty; on that ground, they bowed to no man, however high his rank or station, and therefore he could not admit the charge imputed to them by the Honourable Baronet, of having acted from principles of self-interest upon self-elected authority.

The persons from whom the representations of the Honourable Baronet originated—though they were viewed by the discernment of Lord Cornwallis in a just point of view, as individuals whose private interests were opposed to those of the Company, to whom they owed every thing, and as such kept at a distance by that noble Lord—were, on the contrary, taken to the arms of Marquis Wellesley, favoured by his confidence, and by him

him supported, in direct opposition to the interests of the Company. And what was the conduct of those very men in the last year? Why, that acting as Private Traders, their investments being on board private ships, which sailed singly, they reached India long before the Company's fleet, which was obliged to await the completion of all their cargoes, and sail in company with convoy, by which means the private ships had not only forestalled the markets there before their arrival, but bought up new freights of India goods for remittance to England, to forestall them there also. For whenever permission was granted for the India-built Ships to come to Europe, the Private Merchants would not load upon the Company's ships, by which means their tonnage remained unoccupied. Furnished with such privileges as these, the Private Traders enjoyed greater advantages and indulgence than the Company under their Charter; for they, in fact, enjoyed all the advantages of Trade, without paying any thing for the political expences of maintaining it. But not contented with a participation even on such terms, they now made a demand which, if acceded to, nothing more was left to grant, and a foundation would be thereby laid for the speedy subversion of the Company. But however specious the pretences of those men with respect to the cheapness of freights on board of India-built Ships, he was convinced they would be rendered completely nu-

gatory by the events of peace. The project was taken up in a period of war, and in the full contemplation of its continuance; and it was consequently followed up for the present. But it would be found that the consequent abatements in the rate of freightage on board British vessels, the cessation of all risks from war, and the expence of convoy, would reduce the expences of freight in British bottoms, and still more in other vessels of Europe, as completely as to do away every claim of preference to India-built vessels. But even suppose a preference was still due on account of cheapness to India-built vessels, he begged to know why the India Company should be precluded from the advantage, under a Charter for which it so dearly paid? Or why a preference should be given to their Servants—or, if the spirit of the British Navigation Act was to be rigidly maintained in respect to the former, upon what ground of justice or expediency was it to be relaxed in favour of the latter?

Sir Francis concluded his arguments by expressing his opinion, that no ground had been laid before the House to warrant the Motion of the Honourable Baronet, and by giving to that Motion his decided negative.

Mr. METCALFE (a Director) said, after the full and able discussion the subject had already undergone, he felt it necessary to apologise to the House for

for trespassing on their attention. He should, however, trouble them as shortly as possible, and confine his observations principally to two points.

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Settlements elsewhere; but the spirited conduct of the Governor of St. Helena soon checked their progress, by seizing several of those ships, and sending them for the investigation of a Court of Admiralty, many of which were condemned as lawful prizes, and the rest saved, as many a felon frequently is, by dint of suborned perjury, but leaving in the minds of the Court the fullest conviction of the moral injustice of their acquittal. Having thus lost their interest in the conveyance by neutral bottoms, they now came forward with a proposition of carrying on their Trade with England in their own teak ships, and they had found means to interest in their cause, under the speciousness of their pretences, several men of respectability and character, such as the Honourable Baronet, and particularly the Marquis Wellesley, who had not been above fourteen days in India when he completely adopted the system recommended, and sent home his earnest injunction to the Court of Directors for the adoption of that system which formed the topic of that night's discussion. For the talents and character of that noble Lord, he wished to express the highest respect; it was natural enough for a great man of his description, on assuming the government of a great and extensive country, to endeavour, in the first instance, to inform himself from the best authorities on the spot, of the nature and situation of the country in certain leading points. He would

would naturally be led to consult military men as to its actual strength, and commercial men as to the existing situation of its Trade; but how he should come to consult a set of Private Traders in the country upon the interests of the India Company, who were directly opposed to those interests, and suddenly take those men to his confidence, was a matter for which he owned himself at a loss to account.

The object of the Honourable Baronet was to convey home from India the surplus produce purchased by the fortunes of the Company's Servants; but the mode he proposed very considerably outstretched that of Mr. Dundas, and aimed at nothing less than the opening of the privileges of the Charter to those Private Traders who were the objects of his advocacy—the consequence of which would be, that Memorials would come from every community of Traders in Great Britain and Ireland, to participate in the privilege, and he doubted not were at this moment ready to be presented, provided that the Motion of the Honourable Baronet should have its desired success.

The Right Honourable Member who framed the last India Bill, and to whose talents he paid the highest acknowledgments, did, as was his duty as a Minister, make the best bargain in his power for his Country, and obtained the highest price he could for renewing the monopoly. But it

it ought surely to be recollected, that the Legislature, in passing that Act, had pledged its faith to the Company and to the Country; and he trusted that faith would not now be violated upon the motion of any individual or set of men, without the fullest proof of justice and necessity. The question was not, whether this or that set of individuals had the smallest or the largest share of advantage, upon which the affairs of a great nation were to be governed. Such a conduct would be in direct violation to the policy of every great Statesman since the reign of Queen Anne. And if the Charters of the India Company were to be violated on such grounds, contrary to national faith, where, he would ask, was the security for those of the Bank of England, of the City of London, or the many other great Charters with which the liberty, the prosperity, and security of the nation were so materially connected? So deep was the scheme of those men who had chosen the worthy Baronet for their champion, that he had the fullest proof of many of the documents which found their way to England, or resolutions passed in India in support of the Honourable Baronet's project, being actually fabricated in England, and sent out to India, in order to find their way back again in an authentic shape.

He concluded by cautioning the House maturely to pause, and not lightly to adopt any project

so fraught with injury to that Company, which, if once ruined, the sun of the British Empire must set to rise no more.

Mr. WILLIAM DUNDAS declared, that no Gentleman could be more unwilling to violate the chartered rights of the India Company, as settled by law, than he was: but when the Company had avowed their readiness to concede in favour of the Private Trade, he felt it his duty to close with them, and to accept their concession on the part of the Public. The Private Trader asks to be allowed to share that which the capital of the Company cannot embrace. Shall that be denied him? And if it is, will he not employ his capital in the ships of foreign nations, and feed a rival and competitor in the market? An Honourable Baronet opposite to him (Sir Francis Baring) had said, that 3,000 ton of shipping had been allowed by the Act of 1793, and that the sagacity and experience of those who framed that Act were generally admitted. He would ask, (for no person less wished to detract from their character than he did) was it necessary for them to be endowed also with prescience and foresight to look forward to the present extent of that Trade, and its yearly increase, from that period? The Honourable Baronet had also asserted, that such was the state of opposition between the Private Traders and the Company's

Company's interest, or the home Trade with India, that in proportion as the former increased, the latter always decreased. Unfortunately for this assertion, there were such things as figures, which could not err; and from the last authentic statements on this subject, he would read to the Honourable Baronet the refutation of his assertion.

In the year 1794-5, the sales of the India Company amounted to	£. 5,521,000
The private sales - - -	1,053,000
From this period they continued in progressive increase till the year 1801-2, when the Company's sales were - - - -	7,600,000
The private sales - - -	2,382,000

An unanswerable proof this of the rapid increase of both.

Mr. Dundas commended the conduct of Marquis Wellesley, and declared his procedure in adopting India-built Ships was to prevent the preference to foreign flags then floating in Bengal River. Lord Wellesley, says the Honourable Baronet, fourteen days after his arrival in India, forms this hasty judgment of employing India-Shipping, and what would any man say of a chief justice in this country deciding *ex parte* on the subject before him? Mr. Dundas justified this conduct

duct of Lord Wellesley, as the act of an enlightened Statesman, who saw under his eye, in the River of Calcutta, foreign flags floating to carry that Trade, which the Noble Lord prevented, by opening it to the English Merchant. Was this then deciding on *ex parte* evidence? But this was fourteen days after his arrival. What say the last accounts, dated not fourteen days, but four years after his arrival, (in the month of May, 1801)? "That foreign ships again appear to take advan-" tage of your impolicy, and will again, if the "East India Company is to stand on the pinnacle "of privilege, convey to foreign countries that "which your own Merchants are desirous of "bringing to the Port of London."

With respect to the argument of the Honourable Baronet, that the importation of India-built Ships would be deemed injurious to the interest of English country gentlemen, at the time when the scarcity and high price of ship-timber at home might be so amply obviated by the produce of Indian forests, inexhaustible to human labour, he expressed his astonishment that such an argument should be offered in a country so highly indebted for her greatness to the superiority of her Navy. Mr. Dundas desired the House not to take his assertion for this; he had consulted Lord St. Vincent, whom he named but to honour, and that Noble Lord's opinion was decidedly, that every day, every hour's delay, in the importation of

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teak timber into England, was deeply injurious to the interests of the country.

Sir Francis Baring explained.

Mr. Jones said, Sir, I beg to be allowed at this late hour of the debate to make a few observations, and I assure you I am as unwilling to trouble the House as they can be to hear me, after the length of discussion which this important question has taken; but it will be, I hope, not deemed unnecessary or intrusive that I should give my reasons for supporting this motion of my Hononrable Friend (Sir W. Pulteney), which I have had the honour of seconding this night. I am the more anxious so to do, that I may (as far as in me lies) endeavour to do away the very unfavourable impressions which an Honourable Friend of mine (Mr. Wallace) and an Honourable Director (Major Metcalfe) have endeavoured to brand this motion with. The former Gentleman says, that he considers it as a direct attack on the East India Company, and an "engine of destruction" to the Charter. No such thing. He says it may branch out into a variety of matter, and produce endless inquiry, and great mischief. I say possibly it might; but as to producing mischief, it will conduce to the advantage of the public, and the incalculable benefit of the revenues of the State. My Honourable Friend says, "it will furnish France with seamen—

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France, which God and Nature have made our natural enemy," Why this is an odd expression, just at the time peace has been happily accomplished. But of that no more at present. He says it may injure our sovereignty of the seas. To that I say, I fear it not. In short, all good may be expected from the motion, if carried, and all evil if not. Why then, Sir, the Chancellor of the Exchequer says (I do not wish to misconstrue one word of his on the subject) that he is free to confess that he thinks, "the Directors have not given proper facility to the encouragement of the Private Trade, according to the spirit of the act of 1793." This is the main point. The whole hinges here. I say, will the Directors give this necessary facility? Will they come themselves forward? It does not seem as if they would. This is what the motion calls for. But from the language of an Honourable Director (Mr. Metcalfe) it should seem that the definition of this motion is quite uncertain. Some Gentlemen call it a commercial, some a political, and some an aristocratical one; I call it all. It is a subject which embraces the national interest and happiness. But at all events there is an evident importance in it, and the Directors of India seem alarmed, as if we, the supporters of the motion, were advancing in battle array to take the Leadenhall Aristocracy "*vi et armis.*" No Sir, the alarm, is unfounded. My Honourable Friend only asks for a Committee to enquire into

the Private Trade, the necessity of which seems to be confessed on all sides, by Commissioners, Directors, Proprietors, and the Public. If the inquiry be not granted and a committee appointed that night to make it, the question I trust will be repeated. As to the necessity of it, it is most glaringly obvious, both on this subject and various other matters. What says an honourable Director behind me (Sir F. Baring) though against the question; he says the bad situation of the Company (if I understand him right) will require Parliamentary interference; and so he has very wisely said before. And here I repeat my statement (made in June last) of the debt of India; I re-assert it to be 20,000,000l. sterling. I contend it is in the face of all present, and I defy all contradiction here or elsewhere (see Mr. Dundas's letter published June 30); I repeat, nothing but the most powerful abilities can save the Company from ruin. Begin with the Private Trade; the question calls loudly for investigation. An Honourable Member (Mr. Metcalfe) says, grant this and inquire into the state of the Company, much mischief will ensue: the interests of this House and the Company, he says, are implicated, and also the interests of the country; I know it, and therefore I call for this inquiry. If one perishes, he says, the other will; I know they are involved in mutual interests; but he says, if you stir this question it may lead to others, and bring ruin on the country,

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and that the sun of Great Britain will set. If some inquiry be not made; if the committee be not granted, such is the state of the Company, such I say are its dilapidations.—I repeat my words, such are its dilapidations, that ruin must ensue and with it, from its natural connection, then, God forbid! the sun of England may set. Once for all, Sir, I hope that the Directors will not withhold that facility to the encouragement of Private Trade, which the Minister himself thinks they have done. Let this inquiry be granted, by which the revenues of the country will be most amply benefited, and the salvation of India, and with it that of Great Britain, be accomplished.

Mr. TIERNEY apologised for troubling the House on a question already so fully discussed, and said his reason principally for saying any thing on the subject was, merely to avoid giving a silent vote. The first ground on which he should oppose the motion was, the charter of the India Company, which vested in the Court of Directors the sole control in this affair; and, without violating that charter, and with it the faith of the nation, on which it stood supported, it was impossible to comply with the motion of the worthy Baronet. If he conceived there was any thing in that charter contrary to the public welfare, or that the motion before the House was calculated to remove any such principle in the privileges of the

India Company, there was no man in the House less disposed than he was to be deterred by such *cant* as the phrase of "Chartered Rights" from acceding to the inquiry proposed. But neither proof nor argument had been adduced that night to convince him that any necessity for such inquiry existed. The bill for renewing the charter of the India Company had been drawn by an able hand, and by this bill a line was drawn by which the limits of Private and Public Trade with India were amicably adjusted by Parliament. A regulation was in reality exacted from the Company in favour of Private Traders, by which three thousand ton of shipping was exclusively appointed for the convenience of the Private Trade, and discretionary powers vested in the Court of Directors to extend that quantity, if occassion should require. But now an attempt was made for opening that bill again to consideration, in his mind impolitic and unnecessary. Not a single petition came forward from any community or individual for the purpose; not one single remonstrance or proof adduced of any injury to any party, or necessity for amendment or redress. Where, then, were the assertions of the honourable Baronet supported? Not by the public voice, for in all England there did not appear to be 500 persons in support of his opinions. At a Court of Proprietors, indeed, about 240 signatures were procured; and at other opportunities about 40 or 50 more. But

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But was this a ground sufficient to warrant the House in bringing forward the inquiry proposed? a Board of Control had been appointed under the act, and the rates of freight settled at 15l. per ton outwards, and 5l. home, and this subject to further revisions as occasion might require. But did it ever enter into the contemplation of any man, can the honourable Baronet say, that India-built shipping was intended by the act, or that if such an idea had been offered at the time of passing the act, that it would not have been decidedly rejected? Indeed, without the sanction of an act of Parliament, he thought it would be wholly inadmissible to proceed on the subject. He remembered a proposition of the sort being brought forward by the India Company some years ago, and he well recollected the general alarm it created on both sides of the river. What was the claim set up by the men who now demanded such a privilege? Why no pretence of right, but a pretty plain menace, that if you refused them the privilege, they were ready to do the worst thing they possibly could—to employ the ships of rival nations; a menace which in his mind did not go to entitle them to much indulgence from that House.

The worthy Baronet had sanctioned his proposal under the name and example of the Marquis Wellesley. To that Nobleman, high in character and learning, no man was more ready to pay respectful deference than he was; and had the ques-

tion been one of classical research, no man would have more chearfully bowed submission to the judgment of the noble Lord. But upon the subject of the policy and regulation of the Government of India, in which his Lordship's experience was so extremely short at the time alluded to by the worthy Baronet, he was not quite so ready to surrender his own judgment. He had heard opinions with respect to that country asserted by Honourable and Right Honourable Members in that House, who assumed the profoundest knowledge of India affairs, which he had seen as frequently contradicted by events. The House had been told by a Right Honourable Gentleman who introduced the East India Charter, that this country would very shortly derive an aid of half a million a year from the India Company, in the rapidly rising prosperity of their affairs. He should have had no objection to see the money brought forward, but unfortunately for the prophet his prediction was yet unfulfilled. He expressed his sincere regret that this question had ever been brought forward in Parliament, but that rather, if concessions were to be made, they had come cordially and spontaneously from the Directors themselves, rather than seem to be the result of an appeal to Parliament. Because in India, where every thing depends so much on opinion, if once an idea went forth that the servants of the Company were able to triumph over their masters in an appeal to Parliament,

liament, there was no calculating the mischiefs that might ensue—for if once any subordinate power was allowed to make head against the Court of Directors, their authority would be at an end. If the use of India-shipping was such a tower of strength to the servants of the Company, why not equally advantageous to the Company themselves? But if once granted to the servants, he had the most serious fears for the extent of colonization in India. Indeed, upon the principle of the grant it would be inevitable; and if *cheapness* was once to be allowed as a pretence of deviation from the charter, London would no longer be the emporium of India produce; and the cheapness of warehouses at Liverpool, Glasgow, and other provincial ports, would be pleaded as pretences for storing India-goods there, and favouring an illicit trade with other countries. But, allowing that the agents were to obtain what they wish, would their claims end there? Would such claimants be content with what they now pretend is the full measure of their desires? If the charter of the Company were once attacked and laid open, what security would there remain for any exclusive privilege or regulation which now exists? If cheapness in the conduct of the Trade be the grand argument of the agents, consider to what it might go: it might be found out that the trade was not carried on most advantageously to the port of London; it might be said that greater facilities,

that cheaper warehouses, &c. could be obtained at Liverpool, at Glasgow, or any other port of Great Britain or Ireland. New applications would be made, memorials and complaints would pour in on every side against the obstacles raised by the Company, and demanding new facilities, till the whole system of the India Company, and the present connexion of this country with India, was destroyed. Those claimants would have the popular side of the question; they would hold out the captivating language of bringing all the trade of India to the port of London: it would be said that we might easily exclude foreigners from participating in our advantages; London, they would say, would be rendered the emporium of all the world; and there would not be wanting those who would be charmed with such brilliant prospects But in fact it was doubtful whether, if practicable, it was advantageous that foreigners should be deprived of their share in the Trade. He saw no advantage in producing that envy and disgust among other nations that would render peace insecure. But, in fact, it was not possible to exclude foreigners. It was proved that, though the Private Trade had increased, the Trade of foreign nations with British India had increased likewise. Complaints have been made that the act of 1793 had not succeeded in its objects, and that now it was necessary to carry its spirit into effect. This, indeed, appeared a strange conclusion. For his part, on the face

face of it there appeared to be ground to think that it had succeeded, and that in the very point of the Private Trade. It appeared that, in the year previous to the passing of that act, the Private Trade had amounted in value to about 800,000l. and now it had advanced to 2,300,000l. The danger of colonization, the increase of Trade has an obvious tendency to render greater. The Company would naturally, therefore, be more careful in granting licences for residence in their territories. But would it not be required that, with the increase of Trade, a greater number of merchants should be in India to carry it on? What bounds then could be set to the increase of resident merchants in India? It was true that the circumstances of India and America were very unlike. In America every thing was wild and uncultivated. In India every thing is made. Besides other establishments, there was an army; and, though the fidelity and merit of that army were indisputable, it ought not to be forgotten that, such were the habits of the Company's servants, that the military, among others, expected to profit by any new facilities of Trade. Houses would be established, and become hereditary in India, with immense wealth. It was said that the capital would find its way to England; it would go to the Mother Country. He did not doubt that it would seek the Mother Country; but in a new state of things, and hereditary commercial establishments,

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it was not so easy to determine which was the Mother Country. The real Mother Country is that where a man resides, that where he enjoys his advantages; and surely this view of the case would be most natural to those who profess to be guided merely by views of cheapness and superior gain. What certainty would there be in all Asiatic Commerce centering in England, when those who are now so patriotically desirous of bringing it exclusively to the port of London profess themselves ready, if they are disappointed in their aims, to carry that Trade to other ports, for the temptation of the additional gain of four or five per cent.? But in a more large and national point of view, was it nothing that English ship-building was to be transferred to India? It was pretended that the ship-builders in the Thames would be equally benefited by the repair of India-built ships coming to the River. This, however, was not well founded. He saw, on looking over a document on the case, that out of 200,000l. expended one year on ships of this description, not 20,000l. was expended in articles that really belonged to ship-building. It was a very serious matter that the work of the ship-builders at home should be transferred to any other quarter.

He had devoted considerable attention to the whole of this subject, and he had been informed, on good authority, that before the American war the Company, in consequence of embarrassments,

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suspended their usual contracts for ships, by which there was an alarming emigration among the ship-builders, till at last the Company, with great liberality, agreed to lay down several ships for which they had no occasion, merely to prevent such a national calamity. Was it proper, then, to hazard a similar effect, by giving so much encouragement to India-built ships in the import of Indian produce? Nothing could justify it unless there was an absolute scarcity of English ship timber, which he did not believe was much to be feared. Or, if this was the case, he had no objection that teak wood, as timber, should be brought to this country in aid of our own growth. He could not consent, however, that India-built vessels should be set up in rivalship to our own shipping. But though it was not likely that we should depend on foreign countries for navy timber, he did not see that there was so much to be dreaded from the scarcity of timber at home as some might. At present there were many things essential to the outfit of ships, and which was as necessary as the hull, for which we were obliged to depend upon foreign nations. Certainly, however, after the services of our dock-yards at home, those concerned in them as proprietors or as labourers, might have reason to complain, if advantages against them were given to India-built ships; and it ought to be remembered how useful, on many occasions, the dock-yards appropriated chiefly to

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East India shipping had been. It was known that but very lately, during the alarm of invasion, 30 gun-vessels had been built in some of those yards with extraordinary rapidity. But with respect even to the cheapness of India-built ships, he was not convinced. In the price of the timber alone could that cheapness consist, as most of the articles of outfit were sent out from this country? But granting that they might be cheaper, the India Company had offered to supply British tonnage even at a loss. But the agents contended that this Company would ruin itself by such a proceeding, and were too generous to accept the offer! In his opinion, however, even if the Company lose a little, it would be more than compensated by the advantages accruing to British shipping.

Upon the whole, when he considered the offers made by the Company, he thought the Directors did rather too much than too little. Every thing in India depended upon the opinion entertained of the Company's vigour and firmness. These servants, he feared, would consider this already as a victory over them. The Court of Directors were accused of throwing difficulties in the way of the Free Trade, but he rather thought that this readiness to grant facilities produced unreasonable demands. If they were to shew that the agents should not triumph over them, he was strongly inclined to think that many of the difficulties now

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so loudly complained of, and exaggerated by their runners in all quarters, would vanish. Then English ships and English tonnage would be found to have fewer inconveniencies, and India-built ships fewer of those superior advantages for which they were recommended.

Having considered it his duty to pay a good deal of attention to this important subject, he had thus stated his sentiments on a few points, and should have commented on several others, had they not already been so ably argued. On the whole he was decidedly against the Motion.

Lord GLENBERVIE differed from his Honourable Friend who had just sat down, respecting the agitation of the present question. He was of opinion that the notice of the Motion had no doubt contributed to suggest that liberality on the part of the Company to meet the wishes of the Merchants, which had been announced from high authority. Nay, the departure of the Court of Directors from the strict letter of the Act of 1793, proved that they were not of the sentiment that by the strict rigour of that law they were to be governed, especially when advantages could be extended to Private Trade, without injuring their own exclusive rights and the public interest. The argument of his Honourable Friend against the authority of the late President of the Board of Control in this affair, appeared by no means conclusive. Was it

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not a proof that the object of the Right Honourable Gentleman, the framer of the Act of 1793, had failed, because experience had shewn that after a lapse of eight years the quantity of tonnage allowed, and the mode of carrying on the Private Trade recognised, were not sufficient for the fair demands of that Trade; demands which the Propositions now submitted to by the Directors shewed to be, in a certain degree, reasonable? With respect to India-built ships, he must in the first place remark, that he could not see that in point of law those ships were not entitled to all the privileges of British-built ships; and if a claim had been introduced in a particular Act, by which they were declared capable of bringing home India produce, any doubt on the subject arose from the want in India of those Officers whose certificate of registry was necessary under the Act called Lord Hawkesbury's Act, to ascertain the privilege of ships built in the British Settlements, the right, he conceived, could not be disputed; and it had long since been found by legal decision, that a ship built at Surat was on the footing of British-built vessels. He might perhaps differ from his Honourable Friend, likewise, as to the cheapness of teak ships, but at all events, the opinion of the best judges, the Admiralty, and a Commission appointed to report on the subject, there was too much reason to apprehend a scarcity of ship timber, the growth of this country, and therefore it was politic to save it as much

much as possible. It was ascertained, too, that teak ships were in many respects superior to oak, particularly as they were lighter in the water, and more durable, so that they might be considered as cheaper.

His Lordship then alluded to the paragraphs in the dispatches of the Court of Directors to the Governor General, which the Board of Control had been of opinion should not be sent out. He had concurred in that opinion, and the agitation of the question now in discussion was the reason why he thought they should not be sent out last season. It appeared to his mind still, that since the correspondence of the Board of Commissioners with the Court of Directors, and particularly since the first notice of this motion given by the Honourable Baronet, enough had been made out, enough had been admitted by the Company, to shew that a parliamentary enquiry might be necessary. An enquiry, however, he always thought was a thing to be avoided, if possible, as there was no saying to what lengths it might go, but now he conceived that the reasons for enquiry had ceased. The Propositions made by the Court of Directors agreed that the Trade should for two years be allowed to be brought home in tonnage now in India. This permission given to the Private Trade would evince what would be proper to be done in future. It would try the effect of the Peace. He hoped that it was reasonable to look

look forward to two years of peace, and though doubtless the possibility of future war between this country and France was not to be placed out of view, he thought it unpleasant to anticipate war at a near period, and to view the peace as altogether unsafe. If on trial it was found that the indulgence granted by the Company did not injure its interests, a system of regulations to continue during the existence of the Charter might then be adopted. For the present, however, all ground for enquiry was removed, not only by this offer, but by that other one by which the Merchants were to be at liberty to offer tenders to the Company for India Shipping. This, however, was not a condition of the other Proposition for allowing the Private Trade to be sent home for two years, the Merchants were at liberty to accept the one without availing themselves of the other. Upon the whole, therefore, he should vote for the previous question.

Mr. R. THORNTON (a Director) remarked upon the terms in which the Honourable Baronet had spoken of the Directors, calling them an Aristocracy, &c. He said that the Directors were all men who acted from no improper motives of advantage or patronage; that they had a laborious duty to perform, and they performed it with conscientiousness. It surely was a presumption that they were convinced of the justice, policy, and rectitude

rectitude of their proceedings, when thirty gentlemen, in no conspiracy against the public interest, concurred in their views. He contended that the regulated monopoly of the Company was the only way of rendering the British Empire in India beneficial to the State. He remarked also that it was very singular that though the Merchants complained of want of facilities, they had in no one year occupied the quantity of 3000 tons allotted to them, and it was a proof of the liberality of the Directors that they did not stand upon the strict letter of the Act of 1793, but were ready to give any indulgences to Private Trade not incompatible with the interest of the great body for whom they were trustees.

Sir JAMES PULTENEY declared that his views in promoting the extension of the Private Trade, as well as those of his Honourable Relation, were chiefly to prevent the injury which the country must sustain from too great encouragement being given to Foreign Trade in India; and the only way to prevent that would be, to afford a greater facility to the British Capitalist to carry on Private Trade in India-built ships. The interest of the Company, as well as that of individuals, would be promoted by such a plan. It was said that the Court of Directors were ready to permit this Private Trade; but it was also in their power to pre-

vent it, and that was the grievance chiefly complained of.

Sir WILLIAM PULTENEY, in reply, admitted that the Propositions which had been read by the Chancellor of the Exchequer contained in appearance considerable concessions, but when examined they would be found to fall greatly short. Permission was to be given for the Merchants in India to send home for two years their produce in India ships, according to Lord Wellesley's plan, but the first year it was already known that the ships were coming home with produce, and for the second year it was known that for a great part of the shipping in the Red Sea, to which the indulgence was extended, Marquis Wellesley had actually stipulated this permission on account of their services in the expedition, and should more be wanted, it would no doubt have appeared invidious if, more tonnage than that in the Red Sea being wanted, the Governor General had refused his permission for employing an additional quantity.

The next point was, what was to be done after those two years? On this head he did not see that the Propositions came up to the just demands of the case. The Merchants were allowed to make tenders here of shipping to be sent home from India, but as so much time must elapse in the correspondence

respondence with India on the subject, and the quantities of tonnage required might so vary in the interval, that much inconvenience might arise. Besides, although for the first two years the Merchants were allowed to load and average their own cargoes, in future their goods are to go through the Company's warehouses, and be shipped by their servants, inconveniences which would be extremely felt, and which greatly diminished the value of the indulgence; and, in fact, by this reservation, the Company might throw those obstacles in the way of the Private Trade which there was too much reason to believe it was their wish to do.

With respect to the tenders of India tonnage to be made here to the Court of Directors, he conceived the number of eight voyages, for which the ships were to be engaged, was a disadvantage. To a fixed public Company such a condition might be advantageous, but it could not be so to the private Merchant, whose views, interests, and speculations might so greatly vary during that period. Indeed he could not help thinking the propositions of the Directory as illusory, and showing a determined disposition to withhold every facility from the Private Trade. So much was this his opinion, that he saw no prospect of an arrangement on the present footing, but confidently believed that the matter must again come before Parliament for its

 intervention.

intervention. The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself thought that if no satisfaction had been given by the Court of Directors, Parliament might have interfered to carry into effect the Act of 1793. For his own part, he not only thought it competent to Parliament to interfere, but that it was called on to give efficiency to the spirit and intent of its own act. It was a different case from that of a judge interpreting law, and Parliament had a right to take means to carry into execution what clearly were its own views. That the spirit of the Act was such as he contended for, Sir William showed by reading a letter from Mr. Dundas to Mr. Henchman, in which the Right Honourable Gentleman says, that if the difficulty which had now occurred had also come under consideration, that there could be no doubt that it would have likewise been expressly provided for by the Act of 1793. So far the intention of the Legislature was clear, from the opinion of the author of the measure. It was absurd, therefore, to talk of throwing the Trade open, and predicting so many dangerous consequences from what was clearly the policy of the Act renewing the Company's Charter. With respect to the quantity of tonnage provided by the Act of 1793 not being made use of by the Merchants, the reason was obvious. The rate of freight was so high, that it would have been

been ruinous to the Merchants to ship. From an authentic paper, he showed that in 1798 the freight charged by the Company was 52l. while foreign bottoms could at the same time be procured in the port of Calcutta at the rate of 16l. per ton. He was clearly of opinion, upon the whole of the case, that it was necessary that the subject should again come before Parliament before the lapse of the two years. It was necessary for the Merchants to know what they had to look to, that they might be enabled to adapt their arrangements accordingly. They could not trust to the uncertainties under which things were now left, and they must be obliged to come to Parliament for a permanent and more equitable regulation, if it was not to be obtained from the policy and justice of the Company.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he was anxious that the sentiment ascribed to him by the Honourable Baronet should not be misunderstood. He would not have resisted the intervention of Parliament if there had appeared any disinclination on the part of the Directors to carry into effect the true intent and meaning of the Act of 1793, though he believed he differed very materially from the Honourable Baronet what that intent and meaning was. This he considered to be

be the granting of every facility to the Private Trade, consistent with the exclusive privileges of the Company, and the preservation of their paramount rights.

The question being called for, the gallery was cleared, but the previous question was carried without a division.

T. Gillet, Printer, Salisbury-Square.

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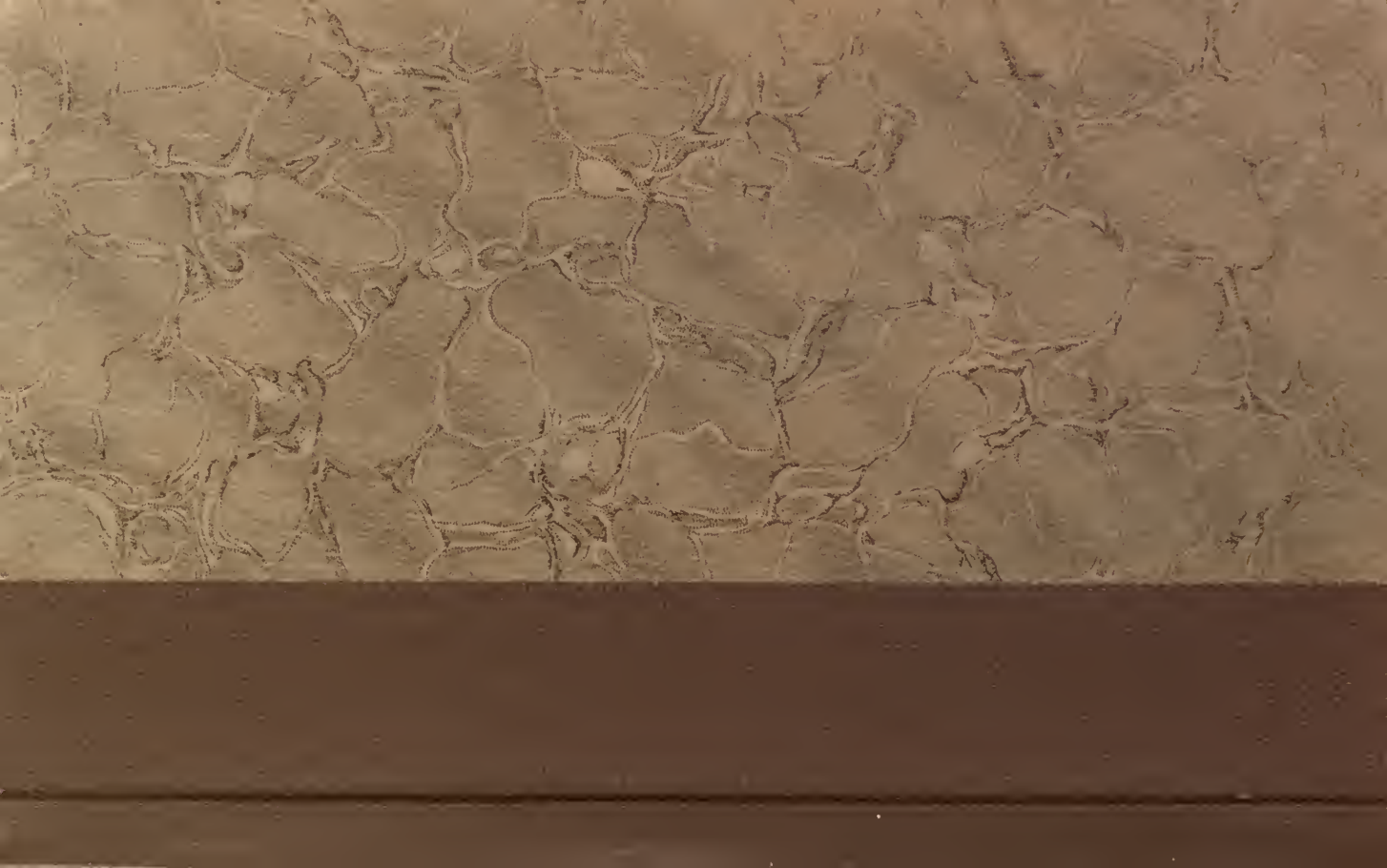
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